

Message Text

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CPR-02 SY-10 USSS-00 RSR-01

RSC-01 /058 W

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P 311250Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2721

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 4436

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US

SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA VISIT

REF: TUNIS 4029

1. DCM DISCUSSED PROPOSED VISIT WITH BOURGUIBA'S DIRECTEUR DU CABINET HABIB CHATTI JULY 31. DCM STATED THAT WASHINGTON PRESENTLY CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF MID-NOVEMBER VISIT AS RESULT OF ACTING FONMIN MESTIRI'S REQUEST (REFTEL). AS SUGGESTED NOVEMBER 16 DATE FALLS ON FRIDAY OTHER POSSIBLE DATES MIGHT BE NOVEMBER 19 OR 20.

2. CHATTI EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR WASHINGTON EFFORTS, AND SAID HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED VISIT WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA. PRESIDENT AND PARTICULARLY HIS DOCTORS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY COLD WEATHER AT THAT TIME IN NOVEMBER. DOCTORS WARNED VISIT THEN COULD BE TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN FOR PRESIDENT, ESPECIALLY AS IT WOULD FOLLOW SHORTLY AFTER KING BAUDOUIN'S VISIT TO TUNISIA. CHATTI SAID IN CIRCUMSTANCES IT PREFERABLE TO TRY FOR A VISIT NEXT SPRING. ACTUAL TIMING IN SPRING WOULD DEPEND ON DATE MOST LIKELY ENSURE TEMPERATURE AROUND 23 DEGREES C. (73 DEGREES F). HE REGRETTED ANY INCONVENIENCE THIS NEW PROPOSED TIMING MIGHT CAUSE BUT STRESSED "FRAGILITY" OF BOURGUIBA'S HEALTH AND HOPED WHITE HOUSE AND DEPARTMENT WOULD UNDERSTAND.

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3. DCM PROMISED CONVEY THIS INFORMATION IMMEDIATELY TO

WASHINGTON. DCM EXPRESSED HOPE WHITE HOUSE MIGHT ALSO
FIND SPRING VISIT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS BUT CAUTIONED IT COULD
BE SOME TIME BEFORE WASHINGTON COULD GIVE ANY INDICATION
OF PRECISE TIMING.
SEELYE

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